

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS29387C1 / S1280

Early screening and identification of students with reading difficulties is essential in developing literacy intervention plans to help make sure every student is reading at grade level by the time they leave third grade. The importance of students reading and literacy proficiency has long been recognized by the Idaho legislature as a critical piece of Idaho's education system. In more recent years the added importance of identifying those student with characteristics of dyslexia and expanding dyslexia awareness has been identified as a pivotal piece in literacy intervention for student with characteristics of dyslexia. The purpose of the proposed legislation is to define dyslexia as used in Chapter 18, Title 33, and recognize the unique influence and challenges students with characteristics of dyslexia face in developing their reading and literacy skills. The proposed legislation, in alignment with existing provisions identified in the Idaho Literacy Achievement and Accountability Act (Chapter 18, Title 33), would require students in kindergarten through grade 5, when they first enroll in a school district or charter school, to be assessed for characteristics of dyslexia and those students that are identified may be administered a second, tier 2 screener, to help identify specific interventions for meeting the student's needs. The current statewide reading assessments have the capability of serving as the initial, tier 1 screener. Additional provisions would establish a list of evidence-based screening and intervention tools for school districts and charter schools to use and assure educators working with these students receive professional development and technical assistance in the best ways for serving these students. The technical assistance and professional development provisions align with those that already exist in Chapter 18, Title 33, and align with the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

FISCAL NOTE

There would be no initial impact of the proposed legislation beyond what is currently appropriated for statewide assessments and professional development. The current statewide reading assessment can serve as the tier 1 dyslexia screener. The tier 2 screener would not be required until FY 2024. Additionally, starting in FY 2023, high school students will no longer be required to take a college entrance exam to graduate. It is estimated by FY 2024 there would be savings in the statewide assessment budget due to the reduction of students participating the statewide SAT test day, allowing the Department of Education to adjust current funding to account for the tier 2 screener. The ability to properly identify students with characteristics of dyslexia will help school districts to be more targeted in their interventions and eliminate potential miss-identification, ultimately resulting in savings at the school district and charter school level. The fiscal impact of the professional development provided for in the new section would be subject to appropriation. Current professional development funds appropriated by the legislature would cover the cost of the dyslexia specific professional development, any additional funding could be used to expand the overall professional development funding. HB 385 (2021) appropriated \$10,850,000 to the public schools budget for "professional development that supports instructors and pupil services staff to increase student learning, mentoring, and collaboration." A portion of these funds would be targeted towards dyslexia specific professional development.

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DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).